



**PREM**

**13**

**2885**

## +

~b

10

)

2

JR Green  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street

DF0 054

8 Xerox

DF0 054

DSAO -T- 00 FCO

DE RBDWC 5049 1831730

IMMEDIATE 021543Z JUL

FM GOVERNOR BAHAMAS

TO FCO

INFO IMMEDIATE GOVERNOR BERMUDA

SNOWI

BT

SECRET 19002. YOUR TELEGRAM QIDANCE NUMBER 142. BLACK  
POWER CONFERENCE. POINT MADE IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF YOUR TELEGRAM  
PERSONAL 60 OF 25 JUNE HAS MUCH FORCE HERE: UNDESIRABLE TO GIVE  
REPLY TO ANY QUESTIONS IN FREEPORT THAT WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY APPEAR  
DECEPTIVE.

2. I PROPOSE THEREFORE NOT REPEAT NOT TO USE PHRASE QUOTE FOR  
EXERCISES UNQUOTE (PARAGRAPH 4(B) OF TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE)  
BUT MERELY TO SAY QUOTE MOVEMENT TO EMBARK IN HMS ARETHUSA IN  
BAHAMAS IS REDEPLOYMENT OF COMPANY GROUP UNQUOTE.

FCO PLEASE PASS TO GOVERNOR BERMUDA. CUMMING-BRUCE

BT

ADVANCE COPIES	
PS	
PUS	
Minister of State (Lord Pakenham)	
Sir A. Galsworthy	
Mr. Morgan	
Mr. W. I. Dyer	
No. 10 Downing St	
Sir B. Trend, Cabinet Office	
R. C.	

(Dept. Dist)

Mando

Pl attach to

the copy of 142 which  
we take to Stockholm

3/7

NNNN



SECRET

C/NER/CAT A AND BY BAC

IMMEDIATE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
TELEGRAM NUMBER GUIDANCE 142TO CERTAIN MISSIONS  
1 JULY 1969. (14)

SECRET.

BERMUDA BLACK POWER CONFERENCE.

THE PROBLEM.

A REGIONAL BLACK POWER CONFERENCE IS BEING ORGANISED IN BERMUDA FROM 10 TO 13 JULY BY MR. ROOSEVELT BROWN, A VIOLENTLY-DISPOSED AND RACIALIST MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY AND LEADER OF THE PARTY'S YOUTH WING. BROWN HAS SAID THAT HE WISHES THE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD PEACEFULLY AND THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT NATURALLY SHARE THIS HOPE. BUT THE PRESENCE OF MILITANT EXTREMISTS FROM ABROAD (DELEGATES HAVE BEEN INVITED FROM THE USA, UK AND THE CARIBBEAN) AND THE VERY NATURE OF THE OCCASION INCREASE THE DANGER OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES BREAKING OUT IN BERMUDA, POSSIBLY SPARKED OFF BY SOME PETTY INCIDENT, EITHER DURING THE PERIOD OF THE CONFERENCE OR WHEN DELEGATES FROM ABROAD ARRIVE OR DISPERSE.

2. AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOVERNOR IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO SEND 80 OFFICERS AND MEN OF 45 MARINE COMMANDO TO REINFORCE THE SEAMEN AND MARINES OF THE TWO FRIGATES ARETHUSA AND MOHAWK WHICH WILL BE STANDING BY IN BERMUDA OVER THE DANGER PERIOD. NO BRITISH FORCES WOULD BE COMMITTED TO OPERATIONS UNLESS AND UNTIL THE LOCAL FORCES HAD BEEN FULLY INVOLVED AND SEEMED LIKELY TO BE UNABLE TO CONTAIN THE SITUATION AND ALSO AFTER THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE.

3. TO MINIMISE THE PUBLICITY WHICH THE PREPOSITIONING OF BRITISH FORCES IS BOUND TO ATTRACT, THE EXTRA MARINES WILL BE FLOWN ON ABOUT 3 JULY TO FREEPORT, BAHAMAS, TO EMBARK ON A FRIGATE WHICH WILL TAKE THEM TO BERMUDA WHERE THEY WILL ARRIVE ON 5 JULY. AT THIS POINT, ALTHOUGH THE MARINES WILL BE ACCOMMODATED AS INCONSPICUOUSLY AS POSSIBLE IN THE NAVAL SHORE STATION, THE BERMUDA

/GOVERNMENT

SECRET



S E C R E T

-2-

GOVERNMENT ARE CONVINCED THAT THEIR PRESENCE WILL BECOME WIDELY KNOWN AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONFERENCE.

4. LINE TO TAKE.

(A) YOU SHOULD INITIATE NO PUBLICITY ON THIS MATTER AT ANY STAGE.  
(B) UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE MARINES IN BERMUDA YOU SHOULD SAY IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS THAT THEY ARE FLYING (FLEW) TO BAHAMAS SIMPLY TO BOARD HMS ARETHUSA FOR EXERCISES. IF ASKED ABOUT THE DESTINATION OF THE FRIGATE YOU SHOULD REPLY IN THE CUSTOMARY FORMULA THAT NO COMMENT IS EVER MADE ON THE MOVEMENTS OF H.M. SHIPS.  
(C) ONCE THE MARINES HAVE ARRIVED IN BERMUDA AND THIS HAS BECOME KNOWN YOU MAY SAY, ALSO IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, THAT THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT TOOK THE DECISION SOME WEEKS AGO NOT TO ATTEMPT TO BAN THE THE BLACK POWER CONFERENCE AND THAT THEY SHARE THE HOPE OF THE ORGANISERS THAT IT WILL BE HELD PEACEFULLY. BUT AS THERE IS SOME RISK TO INTERNAL SECURITY THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT ARE TAKING ALL REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS. IF ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA HAD ASKED FOR THE MARINES TO BE SENT YOU MAY CONFIRM THIS AND ADD THAT THE WHOLE MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE GOVERNOR. IF IT IS DECIDED TO USE THE FORMULA IN THIS PARAGRAPH BEFORE THE EVENING OF 5 JULY BERMUDA TIME WE SHALL INFORM YOU BY A FURTHER GUIDANCE TELEGRAM.

5. BACKGROUND.

IN AMPLIFICATION OF PARAGRAPH 4 (C) ABOVE THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MATERIAL IS FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION ONLY.

(A) THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE IDEA OF BANNING THE CONFERENCE, BUT THIS WOULD HAVE INVOLVED THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION WHICH WAS CONSIDERED LIKELY ITSELF TO HAVE INCREASED TENSION: WOULD HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY EXTENDED THE PERIOD OVER WHICH

S E C R E T

/DISTURBANCES

DISTURBANCES MIGHT HAVE ARISEN: AND WOULD IN ANY CASE PROBABLY HAVE BEEN INEFFECTIVE. IT WAS EVENTUALLY CONCLUDED, AFTER CLOSE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE UK AND BERMUDA GOVERNMENTS, THAT THE WISER COURSE WOULD BE NOT TO PROCEED WITH BANNING LEGISLATION. (B) THE BERMUDA GOVERNMENT HAVE, HOWEVER, PRESSED AHEAD WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A RACE RELATIONS BILL, OUTLAWING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, MODELLED ON OUR 1965 ACT, THOUGH GOING BEYOND IT IN CERTAIN RESPECTS (E.G. DISCRIMINATION IN CLUBS WILL BE PROHIBITED).

(C) THEY HAVE ALSO DONE WHAT THEY CAN IN THE SHORT TIME AVAILABLE TO MOBILISE AND IMPROVE THEIR INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, BUT, THESE FORCES WOULD NOT, IN ANY CASE BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH LARGE SCALE DISTURBANCES FOR MORE THAN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME.

(D) THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN BERMUDA, BUT IT IS A DEPENDENT TERRITORY AND ITS INTERNAL SECURITY IS ULTIMATELY A UK RESPONSIBILITY AND OBLIGATION.

STEWART.

BY TELEGRAPH:

BIS NEW YORK  
WASHINGTON  
ACCRA  
LAGOS

BONN  
BRUSSELS  
THE HAGUE  
LISBON  
PARIS  
ROME  
STOCKHOLM  
UKMIS NEW YORK  
ADDIS ABABA  
KINSHASA  
MONROVIA

COPENHAGEN  
OSLO  
BERNE

NAIROBI  
LUSAKA  
KINGSTON  
[ALL IMMEDIATE]

CAPE TOWN  
TOKYO  
OTTAWA  
CANBERRA  
WELLINGTON  
NEW DELHI  
RAWALPINDI  
KUALA LUMPUR  
SINGAPORE  
BATHURST

[ALL PRIORITY]

DUBLIN  
MADRID  
ALGIERS

PORT OF SPAIN  
GEORGETOWN  
BAHAMAS

FREETOWN  
DAR ES SALAAM  
KAMPALA  
ZOMBA  
GABERONES  
MASERU  
PORT LOUIS  
MBABANE  
BRIDGETOWN  
CASTRIES

ABIDJAN  
DAKAR

FCO (SECRET) / WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION GUIDANCE D.



Bermuda: Black Power Conference  
(OPD(69) 31)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's paper gives most of the essential information. Population figures give an idea of the scale of the problem. The resident population of Bermuda is about 50,000, some 3,000 of whom live in Hamilton.

2. The main questions likely to concern the Committee are:-

- (a) the origins of the situation;
- (b) the reliability of our intelligence;
- (c) the adequacy of the military plan;
- (d) the chances of winding up the commitment quickly and the longer term prospects.

(a) Origins

The plan to hold a conference has been known for some months; and all Committee members have seen the Defence Secretary's minute of 13th June, suggesting that we should have banned it, together with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's convincing reply, i.e. that to impose a ban would have required legislation and possibly aroused more unrest and that the ban could not in any case have been effectively enforced. The Ministry of Defence fully accept the Foreign and Commonwealth Office reasoning; and I would hope that the suggestion will not need further discussion.

(b) Intelligence

With Anguilla in mind, some members may well question the assessments made in the paper. This, however, is a very different situation from Anguilla. Since Bermuda is still a dependent territory we have more direct information than would be the case with e.g. an Associated State. The problem has also been under examination for a long time; and, while the course of civil unrest, once it starts, is always unpredictable, it seems unlikely that, if there is trouble, it will have been due to avoidable intelligence shortcomings.

(c) The military plan

The plan is a compromise between the military ideal of timely preparedness and the need to avoid unnecessary provocation. The planned level of forces should prove to be adequate in conjunction with a local police force of around 250. The Bermuda Regiment of about 250 men can also be embodied; but this is a volunteer unit and not very highly trained in internal security duties. The preferred reinforcement route is through Gander; but

the RAF could, if necessary, fly direct (to the Bahamas). The possible use of Gander (which would be convenient for the movement of the helicopters) has been mentioned informally to the Canadian civil authorities, who made no comment. Clearance to use Gander is now being sought formally.

(d) Longer term problems

The paper suggests that after 16th July the tension should ease; but you may like to obtain the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's forecast of the likely course of events immediately after the Conference. The longer term position in the Caribbean as a whole has been under study, in accordance with a Cabinet direction following the Anguilla crisis; and a paper should be coming to OPD next week. Discussion of the longer term problem should perhaps be deferred until then.

Procedure

3. If the Committee approve the paper, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary ought to report the matter to the Cabinet orally on Thursday and to mention that the study of the general Caribbean problem which the Cabinet commissioned in March is now on its way to OPD.

Amke 1152

23rd June, 1969



SECRET

Mr. Jones

this assessment on Bermuda  
was specially commissioned  
for G-Naval O.P.D.  
The D.N. may like to  
see it before the meeting.

8  
6.

28/6.

For PM's O.P.D. folder.

28/6

ister h  
ecretar  
ver Con  
from t  
for E  
of Defe  
on on t  
P.O.P.D

ster a  
by the  
arning  
quest  
s to b

opies  
to Me  
r Burk

E. Y.

June 23, 1969

SECRET

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute PM/69/41 about the Black Power Conference in Bermuda. He has since noted from the minute by the Minister of Defence for Equipment of June 18, that the Minister of Defence is content that the possibility of a ban on the Conference need not now be discussed in O.P.D.

The Prime Minister also accepts the arguments advanced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary against banning the Conference. He has also noted that the question of prepositioning troops in Bermuda is to be considered by O.P.D. tomorrow.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of the O.P.D. Committee and to Sir Burke Trend.

E. Ymde.

J.A.N. Graham, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



JIC(A)(69)(SA)38

COPY NO. 2

23rd June 1969

IMMEDIATE

CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE (A)

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

The following is a Special Assessment by the Latin America and Caribbean Current Intelligence Group.

---

BERMUDA - BLACK POWER CONFERENCE 10th-13th JULY 1969

1. Since our last report (JIC(A)(69)(N)92 of 12th June 1969) nothing has happened to change our assessment that during the period before, during and after the Black Power conference to be held from 10th to 13th July a potential exists for disturbances more serious and widespread than have previously been experienced in Bermuda. The Governor of Bermuda has reported in the course of his recent visit to London that the decision not to ban this Conference had resulted in a considerable lowering of the temperature locally. Two further factors have contributed to the lowered temperature:-

- (a) the Progressive Labour Party fund-raising fair has been postponed, presumably until after the Conference; and
- (b) certain outstanding labour disputes, in particular one in the telecommunications field, have been settled.

However, the main risk presented by the conference itself remains.

2. Although no accurate figures are at present available on the numbers likely to attend the conference from outside Bermuda and it is unlikely that we shall have a clear indication of the numbers until immediately before the conference, it is understood that Roosevelt Brown, the organiser, has scheduled 22 leaders for the seven workshops and has already negotiated for 17 of which 16 are from the Caribbean and one from America. The remainder of the leaders are expected to come from the Central Committee on Black Power Conferences in America. Some leaders have been asked to arrive in June, but most are not expected before 9th July. It now appears that the figure of 1,500 delegates to this conference, (given in JIC(A)(69)(N)92) was intended to represent the total number of those attending and not just delegates from outside. While it is impossible to give anything approaching a firm figure for the likely number of visiting delegates, there are now indications that there may be no more than about 200 from outside Bermuda.

3. It is reported that the conference will be opened by C.L.R. James, a veteran Trotskyite author from Trinidad; he is reported to be outside the main stream of current Trotskyite and Black Power activity and is unlikely to set a provocative tone. The conference will be closed by Senator Dudley Thompson, QC, known as a radical and unscrupulous critic of the Jamaican Government; he is reported to feel very strongly about the colour question. It is believed that the conference will also be addressed by Bishop Bright, a negro Methodist leader whose district includes Bermuda.

4. At present there seems little indication that the adult coloured Bermudians favour violence, and the air of respectability which the conference will gain through being addressed by Bishop Bright, who will probably advocate non-violence, will be likely to have a generally sobering effect. There is, however, considerable enthusiasm for Black Power among the youth in Bermuda who are eagerly awaiting the conference. Even though Brown appears not to have been as successful as he hoped in getting financial backing for the conference and delegates to attend, it is virtually certain that some militant Black Power leaders will be present in spite of the stop list. The



fervour that even a few of them are likely to engender amongst the local population is the real threat to the peace. There is a real likelihood of an incident, such as a drunken brawl, being whipped up by militant professional rabble-rousers into a serious racial riot. Also the possibility exists that the mobilisation of local security forces, any obvious pre-positioning of forces from the United Kingdom and the implementation of the stop list would be seen by the locals as provocative measures and could spark off a riot. Such a riot could start at any time over the conference period and would be likely to lead to considerable damage to property and possibly to loss of life also. As we said in our last report the local security forces would probably not be strong enough to contain serious or scattered disturbances for more than about 12 hours.

5. Brown is known to be urging his youthful followers, although not in connection with the conference, to demonstrate and has suggested a take-over of the Education Department building, sit- or lock-ins at various schools and a sit-down demonstration in the House of Assembly grounds when the House is in session. Although such demonstrations do not in themselves constitute a current serious threat to internal security during the present school holidays, it is possible that a peaceful demonstration by youths during the conference could well be whipped up by militant leaders into a much more serious demonstration very quickly. The sit-in type of demonstration is most likely to occur when the schools re-assemble in the Autumn.

6. In summary, we have no firm evidence that violence is planned, but the very nature of the conference and the characteristics of the people likely to be involved together will create a situation where there is a serious possibility of widespread violent racial demonstrations taking place at short notice before, during and after the conference which the local security forces would be unlikely to keep in check for more than about 12 hours.

(Signed) N.R.L. BRISTOW  
for Secretary,  
Joint Intelligence Committees

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

23rd June 1969

SECRET

DISTRIBUTION

JIC(A)(Special Assessment)  
CICC(W)

\* ~~~~~ \*

And telegraphed to -

CIA (Washington) and Associates, BE Washington, JIC Ottawa and Associates, BHC Ottawa, Surv. Sec. SHAPE, ACOS(I) SACLANT, ACOS (I) SHAPE, Governor Bermuda and SNOWI.

And sent by bag to -

UK Mil. Rep. Brussels, UK Mission New York, UK Del. NATO and JIC(L) Rep. Canberra.

\* ~~Passage deleted~~ &  
retained & under  
Section 3(4)

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL  
HAS BEEN RETAINED  
UNDER SEC. 3 (4) OF THE  
PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958 AND 1967

J.R. Green  
17.2.49





Prime Minister

If you agree  
with Sir B. Prasad's  
minute I will ~~write~~  
send the attached  
letter to the F.C.S.  
- subject to your approval.

18/6

SEC

muda: Black

d Commonwealth  
ions to the  
a minute of  
I understand  
in the Fore  
e sending a  
be no need  
o arrange  
ionwealth S  
as been hel  
erences sh  
you should  
is argumen  
that his pa  
hat OPD m

PRIME MINISTER

---

Bermuda: Black Power Conference

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute of 17th June advances cogent objections to the suggestion, put forward tentatively in the Defence Secretary's minute of 13th June, that we should consider banning the Conference. I understand that the Minister of Defence for Equipment acquiesces in the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's view and that he will be sending a minute to this effect. On this basis there will, I suggest, be no need for a Ministerial meeting this week, though we should try to arrange one early next week in order to consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's promised paper on military dispositions. This has been held up by an apparent divergence in local advice; but these differences should be resolved in the next day or so.

I suggest that you should minute the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary accepting his arguments against banning the Conference and asking him to ensure that his paper on military dispositions is circulated on Friday, in order that OPD may consider it early next week.

*Done 18th*

---

*R* 18th June, 1969



SECRET

E/P.O.265/69

4



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1.

TELEPHONE 01-930 7022

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE  
FOR EQUIPMENT

PRIME MINISTER

Bermuda: Black Power Conference

In the Defence Secretary's absence I am commenting on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute to you of 17th June. In view of his arguments about the impracticability of banning the Conference I am content that the possibility of such a ban need not now be discussed in O.P.D. I need not stress again what the Defence Secretary said in his minute of 13th June about the real difficulties we shall face if we do become militarily involved in Bermuda. All this will have to be discussed when the substantive O.P.D. paper is taken next week.

2. I am sending copies of this minute to the members of the O.P.D. Committee and to Sir Burke Trend.

18th June, 1969.

PRIME MINISTER

PM/69/41

Bermuda: Black Power Conference

You will wish to have my views on the Defence Secretary's suggestion, in his minute to me of 13 June, that it might be preferable to ban the Black Power Conference due to take place in Bermuda from 10-13 July.

2. The question of whether or not to ban the Conference has been the subject of considerable discussion between my Department and the authorities in Bermuda during the past months, culminating in a meeting between Lord Shepherd and the Governor with the Government Leader of Bermuda and the Attorney-General on 15 May. There are arguments on both sides. It is possible that the scale of any disturbances in Bermuda might be reduced if the Conference was banned. At Lord Shepherd's meeting in Bermuda, however, it was decided by all present that the disadvantages of banning the Conference outweighed the advantages.

/3. There



PRIME MINISTERPM/69/41Bermuda: Black Power Conference

You will wish to have my views on the Defence Secretary's suggestion, in his minute to me of 13 June, that it might be preferable to ban the Black Power Conference due to take place in Bermuda from 10-13 July.

2. The question of whether or not to ban the Conference has been the subject of considerable discussion between my Department and the authorities in Bermuda during the past months, culminating in a meeting between Lord Shepherd and the Governor with the Government Leader of Bermuda and the Attorney-General on 15 May. There are arguments on both sides. It is possible that the scale of any disturbances in Bermuda might be reduced if the Conference was banned. At Lord Shepherd's meeting in Bermuda, however, it was decided by all present that the disadvantages of banning the Conference outweighed the advantages.

/3. There

3. There were two reasons for this decision. Firstly, banning the Conference would extend the period during which there would be a risk of internal disturbances in Bermuda. Since the Colony has at present no powers under which the Conference could be banned, legislation would be necessary: passing of this legislation would be likely to arouse great political controversy and public reaction in Bermuda, which would give an excuse to extremists, in advance of the time scheduled for the Conference itself, to stir up passions and to attract international attention to the Island.
4. The second, and to my mind overriding objection to banning the Conference, is that it would be almost impossible to enforce a ban. The organiser, Mr. Roosevelt Brown, has made it clear publicly that he intends to hold the Conference whether or not it is banned, and it would be extremely difficult for the Bermudian authorities to prevent those intending to participate arriving in the Island. As at present planned, the Conference will be conducted in seven separate "workshops" in places which need not be announced

/until

S E C R E T



S E C R E T

-3-

until they are about to be used and may well be widely scattered over the Island. There would be considerable support from local extremists in circumventing any instruction that these meetings should not take place. The police would only have a chance of enforcing a ban if they were given the most Draconian powers, and prepared to use them in a way that would almost certainly lead to violence.

5. The fact is that an attempt on the part of the Bermuda authorities to ban the Conference would prolong the period during which Bermuda might become the focus of Black Power agitation and during which internal security would be at risk without reducing significantly the danger of serious internal disturbances at the time of the Conference itself. There are also, of course, difficulties about taking a decision to ban at this late stage. The Government Leader in Bermuda has already publicly gone on record in the Island that the Conference will not be banned.

/6 In the

S E C R E T

6. In the light of the above you will no doubt wish to decide whether we need any discussion of the points raised by the Defence Secretary this week. I would hope in any case to circulate an OPD paper on the military dispositions required in Bermuda by the end of the week when my Department and the Ministry of Defence have completed our assessments. This paper might then be taken at an OPD meeting next week.

7. I am sending copies of this minute to the Minister of Defence for Equipment, to our OPD colleagues and to Sir Burke Trend.

1.5.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office,

S.W.1.

17 June, 1969



**SECRET**

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1

MO 6/2/1

TELEPHONE WHITEHALL 7022

SECRET

FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

BERMUDA - BLACK POWER CONFERENCE

I have seen a draft of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office paper on this subject which will no doubt be considered at the Defence & Overseas Policy Committee during my absence in Canberra. I therefore wish to let you have my views on the political desirability of the course of action which the paper proposes.

2. It is clear from the paper, the earlier telegrams, and the latest intelligence assessment, that the Bermuda Government are not equipped to contain the sort of trouble which we can expect if the Black Power Conference takes place in Bermuda as planned. Consequently, if the Conference goes ahead we will have to preposition sufficient troops to maintain law and order in the face of a large influx of delegates to the Conference who are likely to be looking for trouble, and in a colony whose race relations are themselves far from satisfactory. In these circumstances, the deterrent effect of prepositioning troops has to be balanced against the provocation they may cause.

3. If we become militarily involved in Bermuda, there is a very real danger that the commitment will become a continuing one, and on a scale greater even than the one we have assumed in Anguilla. Bermuda could well become the focus of Black Power agitation, making it impossible to withdraw our forces within a short period; and we might become further committed. In either case the consequences in terms of our, and of the Bermuda Government's, international relations could outweigh the embarrassment and difficulties, including those in the United Nations, of banning the conference.

4. I therefore feel that Ministers should concentrate their attention initially on whether the risks in banning the Conference (if it is practicable and even though it might involve the use of our forces) are not greater than those involved in the use of British troops.

5. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister and the members of the OPD Committee; and I should be grateful

/ for

**SECRET**

SECRET



SECRET

for the Prime Minister's agreement that Minister(E)  
should attend any discussion of the paper in OPD  
on my behalf.

DWH

13th June 1969.



Prime Minister

There could be a  
very nasty situation  
in Bermuda during  
this conference.

Understand that Burke  
Tread was to raise  
at Prayers today when  
this subject should come  
before O.P.D.

Ref  
13/6.

CABINET

INTELLIGENCE COMM

JIC(A) NOTE

Note was appro  
meting on THURSD

POWER CONFERENCE

Power Activities

ed by Roosevelt

c of the Bermuda

1969. The or

ough we only k

is likely that

ill attend unti

their minds unt

be available i

hich are expect

s to be conduc

be scattered



We agreed  
O.P.D.

8/23/6.

8/23/6

Prime Minister

There could be a  
very nasty situation  
in Bermuda during  
this conference.

understand that Burke  
had was to raise  
at Prayers today when  
this subject should come  
before O.P.D.

8/13/6.

SECRET

PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC

CABINET

INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

JIC(A) NOTE

Note was approved by  
meeting on THURSDAY, 12

POWER CONFERENCE 10th-

Power Activities

ed by Roosevelt Brown  
r of the Bermuda House  
y 1969. The organis  
hough we only know o  
is likely that we s  
ill attend until imm  
their minds until th  
be available in son  
which are expected t  
s to be conducted i  
be scattered over



**ACTION**

**SECRET**

(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT)

JIC(A)(69)(N) 92

COPY NO. 2

12th June 1969

CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE (A)

JIC(A) NOTE

The following JIC(A) Note was approved by the Joint Intelligence Committee (A) at their meeting on THURSDAY, 12th JUNE 1969.

BERMUDA: BLACK POWER CONFERENCE 10th-13th JULY 1969

The Conference and Black Power Activities

1. The Conference called by Roosevelt Brown, an opposition Progressive Labour Party (PLP) member of the Bermuda House of Assembly, is due to take place from 10th-13th July 1969. The organisers hope that 1,500 visiting delegates will attend, though we only know of some 30 who have so far definitely accepted; it is likely that we shall not have a clear indication of the numbers who will attend until immediately before the conference, as many may not make up their minds until the last moment and funds to pay for the trip may not be available in some cases. Apart from two or three plenary sessions which are expected to take place in Hamilton the work of the conference is to be conducted in seven separate "workshops". The venues for these may be scattered over the island.
2. Although the Central Committee of the PLP has decided that the party will not formally sponsor the conference the support being given it by the Youth Wing has been endorsed and the militant elements of the PLP are firmly in control of the party. The Youth Wing is holding well attended forums with racialism as the main theme, and the PLP intends to hold its annual fund-raising fair, which will have strong Black Power themes, from 3rd-5th July.

## SECRET

3. Whatever Roosevelt Brown's intentions may be as to how the Conference should be conducted, militants both from within and from outside Bermuda might become involved in incidents with which white police might have to deal (the majority of the Bermuda police are United Kingdom expatriates). Such events could spark off major disturbances as could official action against speakers at the conference who might transgress against the new Bermuda Race Relations Bill, and action to implement the stop list.

### Security Forces

4. Police. The police force is 266 strong of whom about 170 are from the United Kingdom. The internal security capability of the force is based on a riot control organisation able, at maximum effort, to provide ten riot units with a total effective operational strength of 150. These units are equipped with batons, shields, respirators and tear smoke only. Unit commanders carry sidearms.

5. Bermuda Regiment. This is a part time infantry unit of about 400 (Headquarters and two companies). It is 80 per cent coloured and the Commanding Officer has said that he can raise 250 men for duty at short notice. From these two platoons (each 35 strong) would be available for riot control duties, the rest of the force being for guard and support duties. The riot patrol platoons are equipped with tear smoke and rifles.

6. Reserve Constabulary. There is a Reserve Constabulary of 80 all ranks, which is assigned to static relief duties in police stations.

7. Effectiveness. There are known to be a number of Black Power supporters in the police and in the Bermuda Regiment; in the event of trouble they could well reduce the effectiveness of these forces. The police force, because of the preponderance of white policemen, is not popular with the coloured population. The Overseas Police Adviser, following a very recent visit to the island, has reported that if major disturbances occurred in Bermuda external reinforcements would be likely to be required within 12 hours and this has been endorsed by the Governor.

### General Outlook

8. During the period leading up to and embracing the Conference a potential exists for disturbances more serious than previously experienced in Bermuda and in certain parts of Hamilton the situation is already



SECRET

described by the LIC as being like a tinder box. The possible widespread venues of the Conference could mean that trouble, if it breaks out, would also be widespread. The local Security forces would probably not be strong enough to contain major disturbances for more than about 12 hours and their capacity could be further weakened by the Black Power sympathisers within them and the chance that some coloured members of both the Police and the Bermuda Regiment might not support the actions of the Government (United Bermuda Party which is predominantly White). The situation on the labour front, with many outstanding demands of the Bermuda Industrial Union still unmet and the union apparently spoiling for a fight with the Government, could exacerbate the situation still further.

(Signed) N.R.L. BRISTOW

for Secretary,  
Joint Intelligence Committees

Cabinet Office, S.W.1

12th June 1969

DISTRIBUTION

JIC(A)(Special Assessment)  
CICC(W)

\* ~~~~~\*  
\* ~~~~~\*

And telegraphed to -

CIA(Washington) and Associates, BE Washington, JIC Ottawa and Associates, BHC Ottawa, Surv. Sec. SHAPE, ACOS(I) SACLANT and ACOS(I) SHAPE.

And sent by bag to -

Governor Bermuda, SNOWI, UK Mil. Rep. Brussels, UK Mission New York, UK Del. NATO and JIC(L) Rep. Canberra.

\* Passage ~~of~~ deleted &  
retained under  
Section 3(4)

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL  
HAS BEEN RETAINED UNDER  
SECTION 3(4) OF THE  
PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958 AND 1987

J.R. Green  
17.2.99

Week End



Prime Minister

To know that this  
(JIC(68)8 (Final))  
study exists. But  
he had to know  
it in a glance quickly  
at ft 1-2.

DW  
12/4